



Mission Resourcing

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Towards a Discernment Process for Ministry

This Document is to be considered alongside the Year of Discernment, YoD, leaflet from Trinity Theological College and the Candidates Information Pack.

“There are diverse gifts but it is the same Spirit who gives them. There are different ways of serving God but it is the same Lord who is served.... There is one ministry of Christ and in this ministry we all share.”

These words from the Methodist Induction Service affirm the belief that every member of the community of faith is called to love and service. The people of God are called to put their faith into action by being salt of the earth and light to the world in a variety of ways, both lay and ordained. Methodism was built on the contribution of lay ministries and in many places wouldn't survive without the ongoing commitment of those ministries.

Yet, in many parts of Tauwiwi, our attention and processes are focused on the role of the presbyter, at a time when that model is more difficult for local communities to sustain. Ministry candidates often have very fixed ideas about their calling to the presbyterate, without always understanding the realities of the role. There is a lack of encouragement to acknowledge the diversity of God's gifts and call.

A Discernment Process aims to give people the time and means to explore their call and gifts and the variety of ways those might be exercised. It seeks to increase candidates' understanding of lay and ordained ministries so that they are better prepared for any role they might seek to undertake. It is the beginning of an intentional life-long journey in ministry which has at its heart an openness to go where the Spirit leads.

Entering the Discernment Process

The Discernment Process begins before a person candidates for ministry. It is usually a one-year process (Year of Discernment-YoD). Those who are interested would need to contact the Directors of Mission Resourcing through Sera by email at admin@missionresourcing.org.nz by the end of September.

Those entering the process are encouraged to explore all options of ministry (diaconal, lay preacher, community outreach, youth ministry, chaplaincy, parish-based).

The person's community of faith and Congregation/Parish need to agree to support and care for the person as required.

The Discernment Programme

The Discernment Programme includes (but is not limited to):

- working with a Mentor on a regular basis
- keeping a reflective journal (shared and discussed with Mentor)
- meeting people who work in a variety of ministries (diaconal, lay preacher, community outreach, youth ministry, chaplaincy, parish based)
- attending a marae event and becoming familiar with the bicultural journey
- being exposed to the diversity of the church by visiting other gatherings (cultural, theological, rainbow, rural and urban congregations)
- becoming familiar with decisions of the Conference about inclusivity
- other tasks as agreed (e.g. preaching, attending Synod)
- any study programmes proposed by Trinity Methodist Theological College

Discernment Meeting

The Discernment Meeting takes place towards the end of the Discernment Process, in the month of October every year.

The person meets with the Directors of Mission Resourcing, the Parish Presbyter, their Mentor, and the Principal of Trinity Theological College (a representative from College) to discuss their experience and to reflect on future directions.

The meeting will seek to discern:

- Where, in the light of the year's experiences, does the person now sense God's call?
- In what kind of ministry does he/she now believe their gifts might best be used?
- where does the Church believe the person might most fruitfully offer their gifts?

If the person feels called to a form of lay ministry (i.e. lay preaching, worship leaders, Sunday school teachers, youth leaders), options for further training and support are discussed and agreed upon.

If the person feels called to ordained ministry (diaconal or presbyteral), the Mentor prepares a report that goes to the Parish Council, Ministerial Synod, and Mission Resourcing Directors. This will be part of the preparation process for Ministry Candidature.

To embark on this Process:

1. Discuss with your Presbyter
2. Presbyter contacts the Directors of Mission Resourcing to register the interested person, from March to the end of September. The Directors provide all necessary details.
3. A conversation takes place between one or both Directors of Mission Resourcing, the interested person, Parish Presbyter, and an appointed Mentor. A program is agreed upon.
4. After the interested person is registered, Mission Resourcing will refer the individual to Trinity Methodist Theological College where he/she will enrol in the required paper/s.
5. At the completion of the YoD Programme Trinity College reports to the Directors of Mission Resourcing on the outcome of the papers taken.
6. The Discernment Meeting takes place in October between the YoD participant, Directors of Mission Resourcing, Principal of Trinity Theological College (or a College representative), and the Mentor.